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General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

34th plenary meeting
Monday, 20 December 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 7 *(continued)* **and 132**

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Pattern of conferences

Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/65/337/Add.1)

The President *(spoke in French)*: Members are aware that, pursuant to paragraph 7 of section I of resolution 40/243, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

Authorization is thus sought for the United Nations Appeals Tribunal to hold one meeting in New York during the main part of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, on the strict understanding that the meeting will have to be accommodated when facilities and services can be made available without adversely affecting the activities of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. It is also the understanding that everything possible will be done to ensure the most efficient use of conference services.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize the United Nations Appeals Tribunal to meet during the main part of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 9 and 13

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/65/216)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/84)

The President *(spoke in French)*: In connection with agenda item 9, I recall that, pursuant to resolution 58/316 of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2010, to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary, on the understanding that the administrative, programme and budgetary aspects would be addressed by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 with respect to considering item 9 in its entirety in plenary, the relevant parts of chapter I of the report that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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In connection with agenda item 13, members will recall that, pursuant to resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly decided to consider under the item the chapters of the annual report of the Economic and Social Council relevant to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summit's, including through the participation in its discussions of the President of the Council.

I give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council, His Excellency Mr. Hamidon Ali, to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia), President of the Economic and Social Council: I have the honour to introduce the 2010 report of the Economic and Social Council, contained in document A/65/3.

The Council's work for this year should be seen in the context of the overall effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which culminated in the MDG summit in September, shortly after the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

Last month, some 89 heads of State and Government adopted a collective road map for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

With the multiple crises — food, energy, climate, financial and economic — exposing the weaknesses in our international financial and economic system, and with economic recovery still faltering, the summit sent a clear message that Member States remain fully committed to the Goals set 10 years ago. The outcome of the summit (resolution 65/1) also identified the continuing role of the Economic and Social Council in its follow-up.

I would like to take this opportunity to first reflect on the outcome of the Council's work in that context and then turn to areas for future action.

The 2010 annual ministerial review focused on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The review confirmed that both issues sit squarely at the heart of development and peace worldwide. Further, the review coincided with the establishment of the UN Women entity. In that regard, the 13 countries that gave national voluntary presentations provided rich information on success factors and experiences at the country level. National voluntary presentations have grown into a vital platform for lessons learned, characterized by sincere and transparent presentations that share successful policies and identify challenges for the benefit of others.

The ministerial declaration adopted at the close of the high-level segment serves as a pivotal action point on progress, challenges and implementation gaps. It identifies strategies to effectively implement international commitments on gender equality and opens new windows for collaborative actions, partnerships and the engagement of new and diverse stakeholders. The declaration served as a useful source for agreement on the MDG outcome document on issues of gender equality and empowerment.

The impact and visibility of the substantive segment were further enhanced by an extensive series of side events on a range of cross-cutting themes related to gender equality and women's empowerment. Those were organized by Member States, entities of the United Nations system and non-governmental stakeholders. Together, those activities served as the Council's hub for promoting and catalysing tangible multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementing the United Nations development agenda.

The prevailing complex economic and financial climate gave special relevance to the Economic and Social Council's second Development Cooperation Forum. The Forum's interactive policy dialogues produced action-oriented policy messages on changes in the development cooperation architecture, aid allocation and effectiveness, and policy coherence. The Forum also sent a clear political message to the General Assembly's High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs on the importance of sustaining and improving development cooperation against the backdrop of the crises.

As a global independent platform, the Development Cooperation Forum was encouraged to engage more countries and stakeholders in discussions on aid effectiveness and mutual accountability, and to promote more balanced aid relationships with more robust Government systems to manage aid funds. The meetings underscored that the policies of developed countries need to be coherent with development objectives. At the same time, the catalytic role of aid in increasing other sources of development finance was emphasized. The deliberations called for greater political momentum and a focus on turning pledges into implementation. It was also felt that the aid effectiveness agenda should be broadened to include

concerns such as conditionality or flexibility to combat exogenous shocks.

On South-South cooperation, a variety of positive experiences were shared. Overall, there was unprecedented participation from relevant development cooperation actors, including national Governments, parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and local Government. I remain convinced that the Development Cooperation Forum should be annualized to fulfil expectations of it as a forum for keeping development cooperation under review.

This year, the coordination segment proved to be a rich source of ideas and elements for the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, in particular on the health-related MDGs and MDG 8, on a global partnership. There was strong support for accelerating progress to achieve the targets for women and children, and the Council gave impetus to the Secretary-General's action plan on women and children, which was launched during the MDG summit.

The 2010 operational activities segment was a rallying call for the United Nations system to gear up towards the next comprehensive policy review in 2012. The Council made a successful attempt to strengthen the participation of national policymakers in that segment. The debates, with a strong focus on country-level realities, provided a compass for preparation of the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities in 2012. There were also broad calls on the United Nations system to maintain a spirit of reform following the system-wide coherence process by continuing the pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency at the country level.

Turning to the humanitarian affairs segment, Member States' decision to focus on the complex issues of operating in high-risk environments, vulnerability and humanitarian response amplified the importance of those issues to our work. Overall, it was heartening to witness significant participation by Governments, the global civil society network, and senior officials of the United Nations system. Moreover, the number of non-governmental organizations that made oral presentations through the new online system of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has doubled and the submission of written statements has tripled.

I am also pleased to report that significant progress has been made in strengthening the Council's work in the area of peace and development. In that regard, the special policy dialogue on the role of women in countries in special situations and the joint special event of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission on peacebuilding and the MDGs, held during the substantive session, attracted widespread support and interest.

Haiti remains a focus of the Council's work. The Economic and Social Council remains committed to ensuring that Haiti recovers from the humanitarian disaster and resumes its path to long-term development. As an expression of that commitment, Council members extended the mandate of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti for two years and asked the Group to report on its activities twice a year. I believe that a more focused programme of activities by the Group, in close collaboration with the United Nations system and in support of a Haitian-led recovery process, will go a long way in helping the recovery. The determination of the international community to deliver on its commitments will be paramount.

The Council looks forward to the General Assembly's review of the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council during the current session to see how its role could be further enhanced, most importantly, in regard to the annual ministerial review, assessing the progress made in implementation of the United Nations development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Development Cooperation Forum, and reviewing trends and progress in international development cooperation. Members will also have an opportunity to consider how to strengthen the Council's link with the Peacebuilding Commission and ad hoc meetings on humanitarian emergencies as and when they are requested.

Looking ahead, we have already set in motion preparations for the next annual ministerial review, which will focus on education. As we all know, education is fundamental to the economic and social development of societies and interlinks strongly with the sustainability of our planet in the long run. The ministerial reviews of past years have demonstrated that no true progress is achievable in any field, including gender equality, global public health, sustainable development and poverty eradication, without the clear inclusion of education on an action agenda.

I consider next year's review to be a crucial element in building our shared knowledge of development imperatives. And we must ensure that the recommendations of the previous year's annual ministerial reviews will be carried through. I urge everyone to engage fully in the national, regional and global preparatory activities to set the stage for a successful and path-breaking session next year. Building on our progress and defining new actions informs the spirit with which the Council embraces its work.

Mr. Ali (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to greet this gathering and express the hope that the discussions here will lead to tangible progress on the various issues and challenges that must take priority on the General Assembly's agenda this year, especially agenda item 9 on the report of the Economic and Social Council.

We are extremely pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over this session. We fully trust your wisdom, experience and ability to guide us to the light at the end of the tunnel in order to achieve the aspirations of the international community to peace, progress and sustainable development.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report under agenda item 13 (A/65/84) and to welcome the 2010 report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3). We would also like to commend the extreme efficiency with which Mr. Hamidon Ali has led the Council's work and the members of his Bureau for their extensive efforts.

My delegation associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of brotherly Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

This year's session of the Economic and Social Council has developed great momentum thanks to the international and regional climate and the need to create a peaceful and prosperous world based on the common values and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, first and foremost respect for the sovereignty of States and their choices, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and joint cooperation in all economic and social aspects in order to build an effective and capable community of nations that enjoys full and multilateral cooperation integrating the richness and diversity of the international community.

We live in a world where many challenges where the threats confronting us are interrelated. There is no doubt that the international community is convinced now more than ever that, given their rapidity, variety and effects, we cannot face these challenges alone. We need collective action embodied in an international organization that is effective and efficient, like the United Nations, and that launches creative initiatives commensurate with these challenges.

Given its universal membership, legitimacy and global mandate, the United Nations can play a critical role in achieving international cooperation to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We affirm the need for the United Nations system to bolster the abilities of developing countries to implement their development goals. My delegation stresses the importance and vitality of the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs held in September. The Meeting was an opportunity to renew our commitments and to muster resources and collective action to meet the MDGs by 2015.

It was made evident at the Meeting that there is an urgent need to expand the scope of the global partnership for development, to bridge existing gaps, and to meet the challenges confronting developing countries. We believe that the outcome document of the High-level Meeting (resolution 65/1) is a road map helping developing countries to increase their development efforts by ensuring more official development assistance; lifting unjust trade barriers, including those preventing products from developing countries from reaching international markets; and facilitating access to fair prices for their exports and commodities. Protectionist policies must be eliminated and foreign debts alleviated, given the negative impact of such debts on socio-economic development.

The annual special meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was an opportunity to strengthen the ties between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in the manner laid out in the Monterrey Consensus. In turn, it serves to enrich a constructive debate on seeking the best means and methods to deal with the global economic and financial crisis.

My delegation is in favour of greater efforts and support being extended to ensure fair representation for developing countries, to strengthen transparency and credibility, and to undertake comprehensive reform of the Bretton Woods institutions on the basis of qualifications and merit and in a manner that would guarantee additional resources for developing countries, including multilateral, bilateral and private resources. This would allow for the implementation of measures and the undertaking of the action necessary to overcome the impact of the global economic and financial crisis.

The high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council focused on the need to implement the internationally agreed development goals and to honour commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It was a good opportunity to evaluate progress made, exchange experiences and lessons learned, and discuss ways to overcome current and future challenges and obstacles to achieving equality between the sexes.

My delegation welcomes the formation of the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and expects it to bolster the Organization's ability to support gender equality and the empowerment of women in a manner consistent with national ownership and leadership of social development programmes in developing countries.

The coordination segment also gave us a chance to focus on the coordination of the implementation of the MDGs. Discussions were held on last year's ministerial declaration regarding the implementation of internationally agreed development goals pertaining to public health. These discussions were a value-added element to the discussions of the MDG summit held last month.

As for the humanitarian affairs segment of the Council's session, the obstacles, challenges and lessons learned pertaining to the coordination of United Nations emergency humanitarian aid were discussed. Humanitarian challenges arising from emergencies and natural disasters are increasing throughout the world, especially in developing countries. Moreover, these challenges have exacerbated the negative effects of the global financial and economic crisis, the food and energy crises, and climate change. There was a discussion of the various international organizations dealing with funding for development, especially the Monterrey Conference and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development held in Doha.

In the same context, this year marks the end of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, which has sought to alleviate poverty, combat hunger and limit maternal mortality rates in order to increase the productive capacities of least developed countries (LDCs), especially in the agricultural sector, to increase investment in infrastructure and to enhance technological capacities. We express our deep concern over the slow progress made by the LDCs, especially in Africa.

As for United Nations operational activities, we confirm the need to enhance the international development partnership based on national ownership of development strategies in developing countries, which should be the guiding principle of all United Nations operational activities.

Peace and stability in the Sudan have been and continue to be the essential and established goals of the Government of National Unity, which affirmed its genuine commitment to peace in the historic signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. That Agreement put an end to one of the longest-running civil wars on the African continent, a legacy of the colonial period. Our quest for peace arises from our understanding that it will create a new atmosphere conducive to accelerated development and to the exploitation of the Sudan's great wealth and resources.

From this rostrum, we therefore call on the entire international community to support efforts to bring peace and stability to the Sudan, in view of the fact that such support will strengthen peace and stability in Africa as a whole. We should avoid anything that might harm or have a negative effect on such efforts. In that context, we call on the international community to support the work being done to hold the upcoming referendum and to ensure that it is a fair, transparent and free event at which the people of Southern Sudan can express their genuine desires, with no negative repercussions or pressure that could lead to false or unrealistic results.

While my country has resolutely striven to meet all the MDGs, it has achieved tangible progress in implementing projects that target vulnerable sectors of society, attempt to alleviate poverty, offer services in

public health and education, including childhood and maternity services, and combat diseases.

In the area of poverty reduction, the Sudan has prepared a 25-year economic development plan, beginning with the first five-year plan for the period 2007-2011, which seeks to implement socio-economic development and alleviate poverty. We have also formed a high-level council, chaired by the President of the Republic, to prepare and oversee the national anti-poverty strategy. As a result of these efforts, our spending on the poor increased to 9 per cent of our gross domestic product for 2009. We have also directed that 12 per cent of commercial bank credit lines be allocated to funding small projects. Besides this, the Zakat mechanism, a social equality project, has contributed more than $200 million a year to combating poverty.

The Sudan has also seen positive developments in primary education. Universal free primary education is now official State policy. We have also formulated a national strategy for the education of girls.

We have adopted a national strategy for the advancement and empowerment of women. In 2005, we formulated a national policy to combat violence against women. We have established a department within the Ministry of Justice to combat violence against women and children, along with a unit established in 2006 within the Ministry of the Interior for the protection of children and families. Our 2008 national strategy for combating female genital mutilation has also been given high priority. The penal code has been amended to incorporate an article aimed at protecting women during conflicts. We have allocated 25 per cent of seats in the National Assembly and municipal legislative councils to women, and the number of female parliamentarians has thus grown to 300.

Moreover, the country has adopted policies and measures in support of child health, aimed at ensuring free medical care for children under the age of five. These efforts were crowned by the promulgation in 2010 of the Child Law. The Sudan attaches great importance to the improvement of reproductive health and to that end has formulated a national strategy and road map for reducing maternal mortality.

In the humanitarian sphere, the Government of the Sudan is committed to implementing the international humanitarian communiqué signed with the United Nations on 28 March 2007. The communiqué guidelines have been successfully implemented thanks to the important role played by the supreme mechanism designated to follow up its implementation, which required the Government to make special efforts to open a corridor to Darfur that enabled humanitarian aid to be delivered there. However, we emphasize the need to intensify efforts to overcome the challenges in this area, particularly those involving the shift away from humanitarian aid to development and reconstruction, especially in Darfur. Focusing on reconstruction and development is one of the most important strategic solutions to the Darfur issue.

The economic, trade and financial changes and world development are interrelated. The imbalances in the economic structures of developing and least-developed countries are still hindering development and progress towards achieving the MDGs. The current world economic order, with the unfair conditions it imposes on developing countries' exports, as well as the heavy weight of foreign debt, which is paralysing regional economic activity, hinder the progress of development. That is especially true in Africa, which, as the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) states, enjoys special status and requires more international development aid, stronger development partnerships and relevant initiatives, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

In this context, I must emphasize the dangerous impact of such natural phenomena as climate change and environmental degradation, which have been primary causes of war and conflict in Africa. The Darfur conflict is a real-life testament to the implications of these phenomena, with direct effects on citizens and their daily livelihood. As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change since 1993, the Sudan affirms the need to step up multilateral global action in order to confront climate change, mitigate it more effectively, and ensure the necessary participation of developing countries in addressing its causes and consequences. Developed countries must fulfil their obligations in this area in terms of capacity-building and financial and technical aid to developing countries in order to help them confront this problem.

In closing, I reiterate that the ongoing role of the United Nations imposes on us a collective responsibility, based on the firm will and determination

to make the Organization a global and multilateral forum for engaging fairly and effectively in solving the problems of the world, in a manner that reflects the provisions of the Charter, and in cooperation with regional organizations, in order to achieve international and regional peace and security. The Sudan, an active and committed Member of the United Nations, continues to be committed to these objectives, the fruit of our collective efforts.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/65/84, and I welcome the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2010 in document A/65/3.

Indeed, 2010 has been another critically eventful year. The Group would like at the outset to recognize the dynamic leadership of the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, and his Bureau in guiding the work of the Council in 2010. His leadership brought an innovative and invigorating spirit to the work of the Council this year. Our gratitude also goes to all the facilitators of draft resolutions for their tireless efforts.

The High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), held from 20 to 22 September, offered us an opportunity to renew our commitments, rally support and spur collective action to achieve the MDGs by 2015. The summit clearly showed that there is an urgent need to scale up the global partnership for development in order to mobilize additional resources to address the remaining gaps and continuing challenges facing developing countries.

We consider the summit's outcome document (resolution 65/1) to be a plan of action that demands immediate implementation. Likewise, we stress the need for an annual review of this plan of action within the United Nations system in order to make the achievement of the MDGs a reality by 2015.

The annual special meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has provided us with an opportunity to review and strengthen the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, as set out in the Monterrey Consensus, by pursuing a constructive and helpful debate among them in order to find ways and means to remedy the world financial and economic crisis.

During that meeting, the Group reiterated its call for the governing structure of the Bretton Woods institutions to be reformed, ensuring the promotion of fair and equitable representation by developing countries, improving transparency and credibility in the appointment of the senior leadership of the Bretton Woods institutions through a transparent and merit-based selection process. We also emphasized the urgent need for adequate resources to be mobilized at the national level and for new and additional resources to be allocated to developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources, for the implementation of actions and measures to help them overcome the impact of the current crisis.

The Group stresses once again that the United Nations is the only global body with universal membership and unquestioned legitimacy, and is therefore well positioned to address global economic governance with the objective of achieving sustainable and socially balanced economic development. It is critical that Member States commit to the United Nations process and to multilateralism and its underlying values in order that it may fulfil its role in global economic governance.

Another important event was the high-level segment on the Development Cooperation Forum, a principal venue for global dialogue and policy review on international development cooperation. The Forum could be an appropriate high-level forum that allows for the broader participation of key actors and promotes an effective dialogue among them. Our focus this year was at three levels: mutual accountability and aid transparency, South-South and triangular cooperation, and aid policy coherence with a view to moving from aid to more long-term sources of development financing.

The Group of 77 and China is of the view that the Development Cooperation Forum should not be diverted to specific agendas pursued outside the United Nations framework. The best ways and means of enhancing international development cooperation, as well as the principles that should be applied in that regard, should be discussed and decided by all Member States in an inclusive and transparent manner, drawing from a very wide range of experiences and practices.

The 2010 substantive session of the Council marked the first full cycle of implementation of the new intergovernmental follow-up mechanism of the financing for development process adopted last year. We were therefore pleased by the adoption by consensus of the resolution entitled "Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2008 Review Conference".

The high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council also focused on the implementation of the internationally agreed goals and commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women. This segment provided us with a timely opportunity to assess the progress made, share experience and lessons learned, and find appropriate ways to overcome remaining obstacles and challenges to the gender issue. In this regard, the Group welcomes the establishment of the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and pledges its full support to its operationalization. We hope that the new Entity will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to support the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women all over the world.

This year's coordination segment of the Council allowed us to focus on the implementation of existing mandates on coordination. We discussed at length the role of the United Nations in implementing the ministerial declaration of last year's high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, which dealt with implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments on global public health. Our discussion provided a useful contribution to the MDG review summit that was held last month.

The humanitarian affairs segment of the Council offered a valuable opportunity to discuss the challenges, obstacles and lessons learned with respect to the strengthening of the coordination of the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. The humanitarian challenges resulting from complex emergencies and natural disasters continue to increase, especially in developing countries. Moreover, these challenges have been compounded by the negative impact of the global economic and financial crisis, the world food crisis and continuing food insecurity, energy crises and the challenges posed by climate change. The Group reaffirms the urgent need to redouble our efforts to address these challenges.

Given the fact that this year marks the end of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010, the Group expresses its concern at the uneven and insufficient progress in achieving the targets and implementation of the Programme of Action, especially with respect, inter alia, to alleviating poverty, combating hunger, achieving gender equality and reducing maternal mortality. We therefore reiterate our call for the enhanced productive capacity of LDCs, particularly in the agricultural sector, and for greater investment in physical infrastructure and technological development.

The Council's operational activities segment constitutes a critical element fundamental to strengthening the development pillar of the United Nations. The Group reiterates the need for a strengthened global partnership for development, based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies, which should be a guiding principle of United Nations operational activities at the country level.

Among other agreements reached this year by the Council was resolution 2010/25, entitled "Recovering from the world financial and economic crisis: a Global Jobs Pact". The resolution reaffirms that employment creation is essential to recovery efforts and recognizes that the Global Jobs Pact is an important instrument for promoting job-intensive growth. We are pleased by the progress registered in that regard by the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Fund, and we encourage other entities of the United Nations system to work towards meeting the objectives of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, whose theme is "Full Employment and Decent Work for All".

In conclusion, let me stress once again that the Group of 77 and China welcomes the new format of the Council's high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, UNCTAD and WTO, since it represents a clear improvement over our past experiences with the financing for development process. We particularly welcome the participation of the President of the Economic and Social Council in the spring meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions, and we hope that that practice can be regularized and expanded in the future.

Mr. De Bassompierre (Belgium): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union (EU) thanks the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3).

We meet today as we are about to engage in the review of resolution 61/16, on the strengthening of the Council. In that regard, this intervention will focus on three points. First, the EU is encouraged by the progress in the revitalization of the Council. Many of the instruments put in place in recent years have amply proven their worth. Second, while we primarily need to build upon that progress, there is room for improvement in some areas. Third, the relevance of the Council ultimately depends on our own willingness to make it work. The EU is encouraged by recent experience, although we can do better here, too.

Looking back at this year's substantive session, as well as the other three that have taken place since the adoption of resolution 61/16, the EU believes that we have good reason to be encouraged by the progress made in revitalizing the Council.

Over the years, the annual ministerial review has developed into a key high-level forum to discuss broad thematic issues related to development, including a review of the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, with a wide range of stakeholders participating. It has thereby become the very embodiment of the Council's role as the principal coordinating organ of the United Nations in economic, social and related fields and as the place to integrate the follow-up of the major United Nations processes in that area.

The ministerial declarations adopted on those occasions have become important reference documents. This year's debate, coinciding with the decision to establish the new entity UN Women and ahead of the recent Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) summit, confirmed that by providing an important contribution on the crucial issue of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The national voluntary presentations, in particular, provide a valuable opportunity for exchanges of best practices and lessons learned. Both the number of countries volunteering to make presentations and the size and quality of the audience at those presentations demonstrate the high interest that they generate.

The second Development Cooperation Forum confirmed the Forum as an important meeting place for global dialogue on international development cooperation. It also provided a very useful and qualitative contribution to the debate ahead of the MDG summit last month.

The operational activities segment and the humanitarian affairs segment continue to make the Council the central forum for discussion of issues related to development and humanitarian operations at a policy level and with a cross-cutting perspective, both through the resolutions adopted and through the interactive dialogues that precede them. The recent Assembly resolution on system-wide coherence (resolution 64/289) once again confirms the Council in that role and is another good example of the fluid distribution of tasks that has developed between the Council and the General Assembly in that area.

Of course, complacency is never advisable. The EU will fully engage in the upcoming review of the organization of the work of the Economic and Social Council, with a mind open to partners' suggestions, but it will do so with the conviction that, while there is always room for improvement, we primarily need at this stage to build upon the progress already achieved.

Let me mention here some particular elements that may deserve attention in our deliberations.

The coordination segment plays a useful role in the follow-up to the ministerial declarations. This year, it was the framework for the first implementation of the decisions taken in 2009 on strengthening the follow-up to the Financing for Development process, fully utilizing the comparative advantages that the Economic and Social Council offers in terms of multi-stakeholder engagement. We could, however, carry the reflection on the identity and function of that segment further, particularly in relation to the general segment.

The general segment remains woefully overburdened, leading to superficial debates and hasty

consideration of issues that require more attention, as well as to the deferral to resumed sessions of issues that tend to clash with the agenda of other bodies. We should explore how to better prepare the ground for that part of the session and whether some of that work, especially decisions of a more administrative nature, can be carried out outside the substantive session. We should also examine carefully how to avoid duplication between the work of the General Assembly, particularly the Second and Third Committees, and the Economic and Social Council.

The relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission, and more generally consideration by the Council of the link between peace and development, certainly deserve more attention. Initial steps have already been taken through the organization of joint meetings. We should build upon those steps to make the relationship more substantial, as appropriate.

Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

To conclude, the EU would like to refer to the important message of the Economic and Social Council's President, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, in his address at the beginning of this year's session of the Council. While improvements can be made to the Council's hardware — that is, to resolution 61/16 — the relevance of the Council ultimately depends on the software, that is, our own attitude to the body and our willingness to make it work.

In that regard, the EU would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the Council, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, as well as his predecessor, Ambassador Sylvie Lucas, for their role in steering the revitalization of the Council. The EU is also encouraged by the positive atmosphere that prevailed at the spring meeting and the spirit of renewed cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, as well as by the constructive spirit that prevailed during the negotiations in the Council this summer, leading to good results and consensus agreements.

Nevertheless, here, too, there is room to do even better, in line with the "musts" outlined by President Ali — a proactive agenda, more focused outcomes, better atmospherics, and avoiding stale arguments. Better discipline in the timely tabling of resolutions, in particular, would contribute to alleviating some of the burden of the general segment. Better respect by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations for the guiding principles for granting consultative status in the Economic and Social Council is also urgently needed.

The European Union stands ready to engage constructively in further discussion about the organization of the Council in the coming weeks.

Ms. Kaur (India): Allow me to begin by reaffirming India's conviction in the leadership of Mr. Joseph Deiss as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I also take this opportunity to warmly thank Member States for electing India a member of the Security Council for the 2011 and 2012 term.

India aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

India welcomes the theme the President chose for the current Assembly session, "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance". A stronger United Nations, reflective of contemporary realities, is indeed the need of the hour. It would ensure that the imperatives of maintaining international peace and security are addressed and that there is an integrated and coordinated follow-up of the United Nations development agenda.

The United Nations conferences and summits held since the 1990s have generated an unprecedented global consensus on a shared vision of development. We emphatically reiterated that common understanding at the high-level events on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Mauritius Strategy and biodiversity held in September 2010 in New York. The MDG declaration clearly articulated that the allocation of resources, the development of appropriate national and international policies and integrated follow-up and implementation are absolute imperatives for the realization of our cherished Millennium Goals by 2015.

Interlinkages and overlaps among the various United Nations development summits and conferences are strong. The Mauritius Strategy would derive immense benefits and strength from a comprehensive, ambitious and equitable outcome of the climate change negotiations. Similarly, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity under way in

Nagoya, Japan, must fully address the various social and economic development challenges along with its core environmental concerns so as to maximize, through such global action, protection against loss of biodiversity.

The multiple United Nations conferences and summits focused on attainment of internationally agreed development goals must have a seamless, holistic and integrated working relationship with each other. We must work to develop work models that ensure synergetic resource flows, coordinated assessment and planning, and a holistic approach to our global development programmes. In that context, India sees the creation of UN Women as an important step towards an integrated approach to development within the United Nations.

The strengthened interaction and institutional linkages between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission are equally encouraging. Our successful follow-up efforts on pivotal conferences having significant bearing on global development goals — such as the Monterrey Consensus and the June 2009 Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development — deserve special mention. We must sustain those efforts. However, it is important to remember that no one size fits all, and it is imperative that national priorities of countries always have primacy in the pursuance of the development agenda by United Nations bodies.

India fully realizes the importance of a strong global partnership supported by international and national development strategies on trade, debt, investment, technology transfer, food security, energy access, climate change and a host of other issues to create an environment conducive to development. India will push for an ambitious, comprehensive and equitable outcome at the climate change negotiations, one that is based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. We also look forward to a development-oriented outcome of the Doha Round.

To ensure that international policies are pro-development, concerns of developing countries must be effectively taken on board in their formulation and implementation. Unfortunately, current institutional structures do not permit that, even though developing countries are the ones most affected. The economic crisis highlighted the grave imbalance in the structures of global governance, including on the economic side. India, along with fellow developing countries, has been in the forefront of demands for a greater voice in the Bretton Woods institutions.

To make the process as inclusive as possible, the United Nations, with its unique position, has a key role. Still, as I mentioned earlier, it needs urgent reform, and nowhere in the United Nations is reform more needed than in the Security Council. Council membership must be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, as is the desire of an overwhelming majority of Member States. I am glad that the General Assembly decided in its sixty-fourth session that the text-based negotiations must be immediately taken up in the sixty-fifth session. It is important that those negotiations are moved forward on an urgent basis.

Also, the United Nations system cannot be strengthened without revitalizing the General Assembly. Here too, I am glad that in adopting resolution 64/301 on this subject, there was some progress for the first time in several years.

The Economic and Social Council has a crucial role in fostering a comprehensive United Nations development agenda through integrated and coordinated implementation of its commitments. The Council has an acknowledged role as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development. It is satisfying that the Council's annual ministerial review and its Development Cooperation Forum have become important events to review efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

The July 2010 session of the Economic and Social Council focused on promoting greater coherence between policy and development goals and making development partnership more participatory and transparent. Over the years, the Council has played an important role in advancing a holistic and coordinated approach to global economic and social development, taking into account the interrelatedness of the different goals and targets of major United Nations conferences.

We must work to make the Economic and Social Council even more meaningful than what was originally envisaged in the United Nations Charter and subsequently strengthened by the various United

Nations resolutions, particularly Assembly resolution 61/16.

My delegation looks forward to the President's proposals on strengthening the centrality of the United Nations system in global governance and its development role. He can count on our express support in that regard.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I am happy to take this opportunity to discuss the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3), as my country's first tenure on the Council is coming to an end, later this year.

During our membership we have experienced the Council as a forum of substantive discussion where important governance mandates come together. We have seen, particularly this year, how important the strategic input of the Council can be to major United Nations agenda items, such as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review the Council set the tone for a successful negotiation process, leading to the consensus outcome of the MDG summit. In that regard, the Council has contributed to strengthening the central role of the United Nations in the governance of international development policies.

The Council also has an important role in the governance of its functional committees and in the election and supervision of the executive bodies of specialized agencies, funds and programmes. Currently, the Council is acting swiftly to guarantee a smooth transition for the new gender entity, UN Women. In particular, where its subsidiary bodies do not live up to the standards of transparency, inclusiveness, objectivity and good faith in applying rules of procedure, the Council itself must take leadership. It has done so in the past, for example in the context of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. Such action by the Council shows that it can and will assume its responsibility to rectify decisions of subsidiary bodies, if need be.

Moreover, there are areas where the Council should consider structural reform. In that regard, we hope that the report of the Secretary-General that will examine the strengthening of institutional arrangements to promote international cooperation in tax matters will reflect the view of many Member States — including ours — that the work of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters must become more transparent, accessible and inclusive.

Another field of particular importance to us, and one where the Council is mandated to assume a policy governance function, is the humanitarian dimension of the work of United Nations funds, agencies and programmes. The Council has the specific mandate to strengthen the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance in the United Nations system.

We are aware of the high political sensitivity of these matters, but we also believe that the Council could contribute more to United Nations policy coherence on the ground, without entering notorious fields of political disagreement. The inclusion of concrete policy guidelines of a cross-cutting nature — such as a health- and environment-friendly approach to nutrition-processing in emergency situations — would strengthen the Council's humanitarian policy guidance and contribute directly to its governance capacity in this field.

We acknowledge that during our tenure the Council has considerably streamlined its agenda and focus. There is much less overlap now in the work of the Council and of other forums, most importantly the Second Committee. The Council now has a clearer understanding of its mandate as the central United Nations body for strategic financial and economic policy coordination.

We must, however, strive for more complementarity in order to strengthen the legitimacy and authority of the Economic and Social Council. Only on that basis can the Council contribute in a meaningful way to the work of all major United Nations bodies, including the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, in accordance with the three-pillar approach reflected in the outcome document of the 2005 summit (resolution 60/1). With the experience of our membership in the Council, we will continue to contribute to those efforts as we continue to see a potential in the Council that exceeds its current impact by far.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, for the leadership he has shown in carrying out his function.

Ms. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to express its gratitude for the presentation of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3) to the Assembly. We would also like to acknowledge the work of the President and members of the Council and reiterate our commitment to supporting and cooperating with them.

Honduras endorses the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Ten years have gone by since, in this same world forum, the historic convergence of the end of a century and the dawn of a new millennium motivated a very promising summit of world leaders and led to a unique set of visionary commitments. The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) promised, on the basis of an unprecedented global alliance, to address the most urgent needs of the poorest people of the planet. Only five years are left until the deadline for reaching the Goals set in that ambitious Declaration, signed by heads of State and Government. Though there are achievements to be celebrated, we are not holding our breath that the task can be accomplished in the time remaining.

The bleak spectre of extreme poverty still haunts and keeps its hold over hundreds of thousands of households in various parts of the world. We listened with the greatest heartfelt interest as, during this latest session of the Assembly — thanks to the initiative of the Secretary-General in convening another special summit to review the road we have travelled in pursuit of complying with the noble Millennium Goals — many of the most developed nations renewed their commitment to make a priority of this unending struggle without borders.

We appreciate this opportunity to add light where light has previously been lit by others. We do that with the greatest hopes, those of us who come from elsewhere — not from what has wrongly been called the poor countries of the world, because I will never accept that my country, so rich in intangible values, or that our people, with serious economic hardship but with the power of their faith, the legacy of their inner resources and the greatness of their dreams, are poor. We lack the necessary development, perhaps, and maybe we missed the good fortune to avoid marginalization, exclusion and inequities, but we are not poor.

We will attempt to summarize some of the setbacks that have impeded the full realization of laudable statements. The reluctance of some rich nations to fully meet their obligations is added to the devastating impact of the financial crisis — springing from wild actions, speculative transactions and immoral, greedy practices — on vulnerable markets, a crisis that the victims did not cause.

If the disparities of international trade force the corn-and-tortilla nations to sell the sweat of their strenuous labour cheaply in order to pay dearly for goods and supplies imported from industrialized countries, it is insult added to injury that to that already unfair exchange are added subsidies, quotas, tariffs and barriers to our export products, each more ingenious than the last.

How can the weak be expected to compete fairly with the strong when, in addition to the disparity in productive capacity, the strong try keep them down in order to inundate them with their products at exorbitant prices and to acquire the fruit of the subjugated labour of the weak at dirt-cheap rates that do not correspond to the magnitude of their work? Nor is the entire production of the more than 500,000 families in my country who make a living by growing coffee enough to pay half of our oil bill to the cartels that sell that resource, which we lack, at ridiculous prices.

To this we must add the cyclical damage of the erratic environment that ends life, destroys infrastructure and kills our crops. The effects of climate change do not come from developing countries, but just the same, they must pay with a high share of sacrifice their undeserved share of its consequences. The terrible attacks of violent nature have devastated many communities across the globe, which struggle tirelessly to emerge from their precarious state of prostration only to succumb again to such devastating catastrophes.

Only a few years ago, we suffered the impact of a hurricane of biblical proportions. In an instant, we saw, before our tear-filled eyes, the accumulated efforts of more than 50 years of hard work and modest progress vanish. We felt as if the fierce winds and the turbulent flooding of the rivers were sweeping away any hope of moving forward. A great many communities that had finally been glimpsing a promising horizon were suddenly pushed back to the abyss of extreme poverty. However, thanks to the miracle of faith and the virtue

of our internal unity, and bathed in the soothing balm of international solidarity for which we are eternally grateful, we climbed from that deep pit with a renewed spirit to overcome adversity.

Since then, we have stumbled many times, as the path we have travelled and the path that lies ahead is stony. And we have suffered many setbacks. However, we are not overcome by the difficulty, nor are we short of breath or, much less, determination.

There are valuable achievements that we cherish and must care for — the good fortune of coexisting in a civilized manner, under the protection of a system that respects freedoms, rights and gains. In a non-liquid economy, where almost all income goes to expenses that barely cover basic needs and requirements, we value the possibility of having some resources for social investment — the commitment to invest in our people or in programmes designed as part of the poverty reduction strategy and in the school meal programme that reduces the school dropout rate and enhances the physical and moral state of our little promises of the future, to cite two examples among many. Those are minimal resources to ensure that the national plan recently adopted by the current Administration does not become a useless document taking up space in a forgotten desk drawer.

We must confess that we feel overwhelmed, sometimes even discouraged, by those critical limitations and tremendous negations that undermine the possibility of living a life with dignity. There is no peace when justice is lacking. There will be no tranquillity as long as one part of the population enjoys the benefits of the system, flourishes in its blessings and participates in all its opportunities while a vast majority feels bad, powerless and marginalized, afflicted because daily living seems more like a slow and cruel agony, awaiting the inevitable.

We must not leave any room for extreme poverty to destroy the possibilities of the future. We cannot accept excuses or pretexts while in so many corners of the world entire families go to bed hoping that the caress of needed sleep will pacify the hunger in their empty stomachs. We must shorten the wait so that patience will not run out. Hence the renewed commitment emerging from the recent Assembly meeting that ordered the review of the Millennium Development Goals and the accelerated march imposed on us, so that we can fill the dimension of words with action.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): At the outset, I wish to state that the Philippines aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Yemen delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report in document A/65/84 and to commend His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Hamidon Ali of Malaysia for his untiring efforts, as President of the Economic and Social Council, to revitalize and improve the working methods of that body. His "five musts" strategy may prove to be a worthy legacy for his successors and should indeed be applied to all other areas of work in the United Nations.

The full record of the Economic and Social Council's activities as contained in the pages of document A/65/3 reflects the comprehensive approach that that vital United Nations organ takes to its deliberations on the relevant topics. The rapid institutionalization of the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review shows the keen interest of Member States in participating in our discussions. The enhanced format of the Council's meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions also signals the crucial role that the Council and the United Nations have in discussions on global financial and economic matters, especially in the midst of the so called great recession from which we are now — or still tentatively — recovering.

The Philippines, as an active member of the Economic and Social Council, notes the landmark achievement of the creation of UN Women, which took place in the same year that the annual ministerial review focused precisely on the theme of implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments with regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Philippines — a country that has had two female Presidents and that considers itself to be a passionate advocate of the advancement of women's rights and welfare — similarly took significant steps forward with the passage of the Magna Carta of Women in August 2009 and the issuance of its Implementing Rules and Regulations in June this year.

The Magna Carta of Women is a comprehensive women's human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights of Filipino women, especially those in the marginalized sectors. Similar to what UN Women has done in the United Nations system, the Magna Carta has brought together the different government agencies and functions that deal with women's issues under the supervision of the Philippine Commission on Women.

The continued monitoring by the Economic and Social Council of issues relating to the advancement of women's rights and welfare is a reassuring fact that my country recognizes and supports. The Philippines similarly supports calls for strengthening the Development Cooperation Forum in order to reap the full benefit of its potential in harnessing the lessons learned in the Forum and linking them with the various development activities implemented within and outside the United Nations. The active exchange of ideas and the participation of countries during the Forum policy dialogues signify the value of the process in our discussions.

We would also like to underscore the importance of the past year's discussions of the Economic and Social Council's various segments, which cover a broad spectrum of issues. To go into each of those items would take too much time, but suffice it to say that such activities represent key development issues that affect all of us on a daily basis. Who would disagree that economic, social and environmental issues are the most crucial topics and preoccupy the majority of, if not all, members of the United Nations?

If only to highlight a few of the many issues in which the Philippines has particular interest, let me say that they would be the areas of humanitarian assistance, climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development in general. As a country that suffers from frequent natural disasters, many of which are weather-related, we can only hope that our discussions in the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions will be based on the greater common good and the legacy that we wish to leave to future generations.

Allow me then to conclude by pledging the Philippines' full support for the ongoing improvement of the working methods of the Economic and Social Council as it fulfils its pre-eminent role in key global discussions that will affect the lives of our peoples. We look forward to continuing our work under the very able leadership of Ambassador Hamidon Ali and share his hope that the Council will change with the times in order to remain relevant and proactive.

Mr. Gutiérrez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Peru associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also thank the Secretary-General for the report submitted under this agenda item (A/65/84), and we note with satisfaction the 2010 report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3). We also wish to express our gratitude to the Council's President, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, and the Bureau supporting him for the important work undertaken.

This year, the effects of the international economic and financial crisis continue to affect the economic and social prospects for developing countries and, therefore, their possibilities of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The outcome of the review carried out at the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, held in September, showed that we, the developing countries, have made great progress towards achieving those Goals, but also that work remains for which greater commitment and cooperation by all global actors is needed (resolution 65/1).

With regard to efforts to recover from the crisis, it is extremely important to strengthen employment and social protection policies and to promote greater international cooperation so as to speed up and sustain the recovery, with particular attention to low- and middle-income countries. In that regard, the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council to accelerate implementation of the Global Jobs Pact was a very significant outcome of its work (Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/25). I would like to point out that the measures proposed by the Global Jobs Pact, in particular those related to investment in labour-intensive infrastructure and support for small- and medium-sized enterprises, have proved to be effective mechanisms to promote employment and to combat poverty in my country.

The possibility of developing countries, such as mine, continuing on the path of growth and addressing the effects of the crisis also depends, to a large extent, on a positive international environment. In that regard, we believe that the efforts to develop a constructive

dialogue among all actors involved in creating a new international financial architecture are particularly significant. To that end, the points of view of the smaller countries, which comprise the greater part of the United Nations, must be taken into account.

Similarly, we underscore the importance of international trade as an engine for development for a large number of countries, including mine, Peru. Thus, we reiterate the need to avoid any protectionist tendency and to move towards a prompt conclusion of the Doha Development Round. The annual meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held last spring, is an important forum to move our work forward in the appropriate direction.

The second Development Cooperation Forum, held in June, provided innovative discussions on that issue and concluded that, in the current global economic situation, official development assistance and financing for development continued to be crucial to guarantee progress in achieving the Development Goals.

We firmly believe that financial and technical development cooperation is also indispensable and such cooperation should seek to mobilize resources for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, whose development and strengthening provide an effective mechanism to combat poverty, as has been seen in my country. In that regard, promoting and strengthening financial cooperation for research, innovation and technology, as well as human resource training, are absolutely essential.

In that regard, we would like to point out that the operational activities segment, which focused on the work of Economic and Social Council at the country level, concluded that the United Nations system remains a reliable partner for developing countries in the area of capacity-building.

The ministerial meeting of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council adopted the important declaration on "Implementing the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments in regard to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" at nearly the same time as the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN Women, was established. We believe that action to have been one of the Council's most significant contributions in 2010, acknowledging that gender equality and the empowerment of women play a central role in development and peace in the world.

The coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution on the role of the United Nations system in implementing the 2009 ministerial declaration on global public health (Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/24). The Peruvian Government has made great achievements in the area of health. To continue along that path, we would like to reiterate the need for cooperation benefiting middle-income countries in the fight against HIV/AIDS and for greater attention to be given to non-communicable diseases.

To conclude, I must point out that a topic that must not be overlooked in our current and future work is climate change. Peru is particularly vulnerable, without having been a cause of that phenomenon. The worrying situation of the environmental degradation that we are currently experiencing means that adaptation to climate change must be a central element in international decisions on financing for development.

For all those reasons, we believe that the Economic and Social Council must keep on its agenda the item "Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development", including the many decisions that I have mentioned in this statement.

Mr. Kurlovich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus commends the work of the Economic and Social Council in the reporting period and the Ambassador of Malaysia, Mr. Hamidon Ali, for his skilful leadership. I would like to emphasize the efficient organization of the 2010 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, whose outcome made an important contribution to the work of the summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I would emphasize, in particular, the strengthening of the practical importance of that high-level segment for the entire United Nations system.

Belarus favours further strengthening of the role of the Economic and Social Council as the main body responsible for coordinating the various funds and programmes of the United Nations system, including reviewing policies and monitoring implementation of the MDGs. As part of that work, special emphasis should be placed on ensuring a system-wide

environment conducive to stimulating fair international trade and providing expertise and technical assistance to developing and middle-income countries.

We welcome the relatively new methodologies in the work of the Economic and Social Council. We believe that the Economic and Social Council has considerably strengthened its structure and capacity through annual ministerial reviews. We believe that that mechanism, with its powerful mobilizing impact, should be further strengthened. The Development Cooperation Forum has become an important mobilizing and coordination factor of the Economic and Social Council.

We think that the ministerial meetings, annual reviews and the Development Cooperation Forum should become the main platforms for discussing agenda issues related to achieving the MDGs and the United Nations development agenda after 2015. In that connection, Belarus believes that the Assembly should consider enhancing the role of the Forum, including strengthening its institutional status and the frequency of its meetings and the preparation of its outcome documents.

One of the most important aspects of the ministerial reviews is the system of voluntary national presentations on the achievement of development targets, which serve as a unique mechanism for accountability and feedback on the achievement of the MDGs. They clearly point the way towards implementation of global priorities at the national level. That is why we welcome the positive trend to expand this practice. My delegation notes that Belarus will submit its national report at the 2011 session of the Economic and Social Council.

Belarus believes it is necessary to take into consideration the consequences of climate change in the long-term strategies on financing for development and developing a green economy.

An important factor in achieving the MDGs is to shape a new architecture in the energy field in order to ensure universal access to energy services. As part of this process, special attention should be paid to the open exchange of environmentally friendly and affordable energy technologies. Unfortunately, energy issues have not yet become a priority on the United Nations agenda. At the same time, without access to modern energy resources, an adequate level of human development will clearly be unattainable.

Belarus supports the practice of periodic reviews of operational activities for development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. At the same time, in order to make this work more efficient, the Council agenda should include periodic Government opinion surveys on the impact and significance of support provided by the United Nations system.

We support further review of the predictability and adequacy of funding sources for development activities. Given the reduction in core resources, we believe it is important to strengthen the transparency of the donor system to finance development and to establish a flexible system of cooperation between recipient countries, donors and the United Nations system.

Belarus commends the holding of high-level meetings of the Economic and Social Council with the participation of representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization. We think that this practice should be continued. At the same time, we suggest considering optimizing the agenda of the joint meetings with special emphasis on their efficiency with regard to restructuring the international financial architecture and turning it into a driving force of equitable economic growth.

The main responsibility for ensuring that decisions adopted at the various conferences and summits of the United Nations are implemented lies with the specialized agencies of the United Nations. In order to ensure successful monitoring of the implementation of those decisions and the resulting activities a closer relationship among the governing bodies of the United Nations is important — first and foremost between the Economic and Social Council and the other specialized agencies. We wish the Economic and Social Council every success in implementing this important task.

Mr. Savostianov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset I would like to express our gratitude to the President of the Economic and Social Council for presenting the Council's report (A/65/3) and also to thank the Secretariat for supporting the work of the Council during the current year. The Russian Federation has consistently favoured strengthening the role of the United Nations as one of

the principal forums for coordinating multilateral development efforts and developing the basic standards on international cooperation in the economic, humanitarian and environmental spheres. In that context, the work of the Economic and Social Council is now of significant priority. It possesses all of the necessary mechanisms to conduct fruitful discussions on all key global and intersectoral economic issues with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

In the current year, the Council's agenda included important tasks related, inter alia, to preparations for the United Nations summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), also to promoting the international agenda in the area of financing for development and strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system with a view to ensuring a more effective response to the negative consequences of the global financial and economic crisis.

Russia is satisfied with the results of the main session of the Economic and Social Council this year, including the Annual Ministerial Review of the progress in implementation of the MDGs and the Development Cooperation Forum.

We note the intensive and useful work accomplished in the framework of the coordination, operation and humanitarian segments of the session. That clearly confirmed the very important role played by the Economic and Social Council in ensuring the coherence of the entire system, which is very important for comprehensive, coordinated implementation of decisions by global forums in the economic, social and related fields.

This year, the Economic and Social Council has effectively shown itself to be an integral part of the intergovernmental process of follow-up to the outcomes of international conferences dedicated to financing for development. We welcome the successful organization in March of the special high-level meetings of the Economic and Social Council with the participation of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. We are convinced that the Council should continue to make a tangible contribution to the development of mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and the international, financial and trade institutions, as well as other key participants in the post-Monterrey process, which includes non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

In the course of the current session of the General Assembly, the Assembly will have to review progress in implementing resolution 61/16, which defined the new functions of the Economic and Social Council as decided in the political agreements reached at the 2005 World Summit. We think that any decisions on any future strengthening of the Economic and Social Council should be aimed first and foremost at ensuring the effective work of the Council in support of efforts by Member States and United Nations entities implementing the programme of action adopted at the United Nations summit on the Millennium Development Goals. Work to implement the decisions of the summit will require a comprehensive and coordinated approach. It will require articulating the policies and programmes of the United Nations system with national priorities and strategies and with the goals and challenges of the development agenda. It will require organizing effective intergovernmental monitoring and evaluation of its implementation. We are convinced that those goals can be reached within the current format and structure of the main session of the Council.

The main platform for a systematic and comprehensive monitoring of progress in the implementation of the MDGs is, in our view, the annual ministerial review. The choice of theme for the reviews for the period covering 2012-2015 will be decisive. We support strengthening the Development Cooperation Forum as a useful multilateral format in which the major, dynamically developing economies can participate fully in the process of decision-making and in developing new approaches to providing assistance. That is one of the priority goals and is a premise for strengthening the international architecture for development assistance.

An important area of work in optimizing the agenda of the Economic and Social Council, bearing in mind the decisions of the United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, is to adjust the mandates of the segments of the main session of the Council, including a clearer definition of the goals of the coordination segment. We also think that there is potential for strengthening the Council in the process of moving away from emergency assistance and towards more long-term assistance in cases of natural disasters and also in the

context of post-conflict peacebuilding. It is clear that this work should be carried out with the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in mind. Of course, all of these steps should not undermine the role of the Council as the coordinator of the programme activity of the various socio-economic bodies of the United Nations.

The delegation of the Russian Federation is ready to cooperate in a constructive fashion with all partners in order to further strengthen the Economic and Social Council. We think that the upcoming review of the implementation of resolution 61/16 during this session of the General Assembly will give further impetus to the work of the Council as the most important mechanism for developing and agreeing on the major political decisions in the area of development. The review will also make it possible for the Council to become a more dynamic and more effective body of the United Nations.

Mr. Koterec (Slovakia): Slovakia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium, who spoke on behalf of the European Union.

The most recent session of the Economic and Social Council had many significant moments. We witnessed the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as UN Women, which was an important step towards eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and strengthening their voice worldwide. The annual ministerial review has proved itself to be a strong instrument for discussing key issues in the economic and social fields. The ministerial declaration that was adopted was very results-oriented and presented a solid base for a successful High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was held in September. The numerous national voluntary presentations during the review revealed national approaches and experiences, pointing out success stories as well as shortcomings. All the best practices that were presented offered valuable ideas in helping many countries to move forward faster.

A year ago, Slovakia was one of 18 Member States elected to serve on the Economic and Social Council. During the initial period of our term, we have done our best to be an active and transparent team partner in one of the most important bodies of the United Nations system. We consider the Economic and Social Council to be a body with great potential to make significant contributions to solving the problems of today's world.

Nearly four years have gone by since the adoption of resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. A lot of work has been done, and I would like to thank the President of the Council, His Excellency Ambassador Hamidon Ali, as well as his predecessors, for the work they have done, especially since 2007.

Nevertheless, there is still much work to do to strengthen the role of the Council as the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the international development goals agreed at major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals.

It is crucial that more emphasis be put on system-wide coordination and integration, on carrying out new programmes and policies in the economic, social and humanitarian fields, and on promoting global dialogue and closer cooperation with other bodies of the United Nations system. For example, why do we not attempt to take advantage of the potential for closer collaboration between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council? Many of the issues dealt with by those two bodies are linked, and I am convinced that more visible results could be achieved in a shorter amount of time, if those linkages were explored. The Peacebuilding Commission is an important aspect of that link. The current review of the Commission's work suggests that it could play a greater role in the future.

In this period of pressing need for the innovative use of resources, one can see a possibility for another pragmatic change in the work of the Economic and Social Council, namely, in the general segment. With each passing year, the Council's agenda is increasingly overburdened. Many of the issues it deals with overlap with those addressed in the General Assembly and its Committees and are thus unnecessarily discussed twice. We must reverse that negative trend, if we are to save the expertise and energy of the Council for the core issues in its purview.

Furthermore, Slovakia supports strengthening the position of the Development Cooperation Forum, which should evolve into a forum that generates new

ideas and models, emphasizes wide coordination, and speaks with a stronger political voice. For that reason, we suggest considering holding Forum meetings on a yearly basis.

Slovakia will continue to strive to be a trustworthy and innovative partner. All of us can contribute to the work of the Economic and Social Council by being responsible and pragmatic in our efforts.

Mr. Saripudin (Indonesia): It is my honour to address the General Assembly in the joint debate on agenda items 9 and 13. Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Yemen, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Let me express my sincere and deep appreciation to Ambassador Hamidon Ali of Malaysia for his able leadership during this year's session of the Economic and Social Council. I also thank the Secretary-General for his note submitted under agenda item 9 (A/65/216) and for his reported submitted under agenda item 13 (A/65/84).

The General Assembly of the United Nations has advanced the reduction of poverty, together with other related development issues, either individually or in combination, through United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose deadline has been set for 2015, have served as an important platform for emphasizing the synergies among the outcomes of the conferences and summits. Each of the Goals has a direct impact on the others. Therefore, to succeed in any one of them requires progress on all of them. Accordingly, the progress with regard to the MDGs is a vital part of the effective implementation of resolution 57/270 B.

During the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in September, there was broad consensus in favour of more vigorous action to enable all countries to achieve the MDGs. Economic growth and development were recognized as an important avenue for meeting the Goals. However, none of us can perform that task in isolation — no Government, however well-intentioned, no private sector, however generous, no non-governmental organization, however determined.

We can meet the MDGs only through a genuine global partnership for development. The Monterrey Consensus, the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development and the Doha Development Round provide the frameworks for the global partnership for development, and it is important that the commitments laid out in those frameworks be fully implemented.

Just as we reached the 10 year mark for the MDGs this year, the Economic and Social Council emphasized the strategic link between gender and the achievement of the MDGs. Indonesia therefore welcomes the decision to establish UN Women. We hope that having a dedicated gender entity in the United Nations, led by Ms. Bachelet, will enhance coherence, effectiveness and efficiency in United Nations operational activities and norm-setting on gender matters. We hope that it will further support the implementation of action-oriented strategies and integrated, comprehensive, multisectoral and gender-responsive approaches.

Recognizing prevalent gender inequalities, the 2010 ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council rightly emphasized measures to address the inequalities constraining women, through their root causes. Health was identified as a major obstacle to the advancement of women. The Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health and its Joint Action Plan are important initiatives that Indonesia has been supporting from their inception. Gender gaps have been further compounded by the economic and financial crisis. It is therefore crucial to effectively address that crisis in order to advance the gender theme of the Economic and Social Council this year.

Given the importance of accelerating progress on the MDGs, all stakeholders, including the United Nations, need to continue to play an active role. Indonesia appreciates and commends the efforts of the entire United Nations system to improve its effectiveness through various actions. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's report in document A/65/84 recommends that a United Nations-based mechanism be established to review the implementation of the outcome of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs (resolution 65/1). The strengthened function of the Economic and Social Council makes it strategically placed to fulfil that role. The Economic and Social Council could perform this function through the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum. The recommendation in the Secretary-General's report merits further consideration.

As for Indonesia, we have integrated the MDGs into our national development strategy. Through two presidential decrees this year, the Government is going to accelerate implementation of the 2010 national development priorities and promote justice in a national development programme. The decrees provide a vital link among development actors from the national to the subnational levels to coordinate and integrate pro-people development with the establishment of justice for all and the accelerated achievement of the MDGs.

Mr. Barton (United States of America): First of all, I would like to thank the President of the Assembly for convening this meeting and the Secretary-General for his report on recent improvements to the working methods of the Economic and Social Council and its role in follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits (A/65/84).

We wish to commend the strong leadership of Ambassador Ali and his predecessors in advancing meaningful improvements to the working methods of the Economic and Social Council and greatly enhancing its relevance and contributions to the United Nations development system. The strengthening of the annual ministerial review and its focus on key thematic issues related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ensured that the Economic and Social Council played a vital role in the MDG summit. The United States was pleased to have joined others this year in making our national voluntary presentation on gender equality and women's empowerment and to have an opportunity to exchange views and valuable information and experiences with other delegations.

Our delegation was also pleased at the balance and breadth of discussion at this year's biennial Development Cooperation Forum, which continues to develop in its discussion of development assistance and cooperation. In this regard, the United States supports maintaining the current format and frequency of biennial Development Cooperation Forum meetings, which allows more time for broader reflection than annual meetings. The United States also wishes to express support for ongoing efforts to streamline and better rationalize the agenda items of the Council. Regarding follow-up to the MDG summit, we note that the outcome document clearly outlines follow-up arrangements, which can be found in paragraphs 79 through 81.

Mr. Almeida (Brazil): Brazil fully endorses the statement made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would also like to take this opportunity to warmly commend the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, for his leadership at the head of that important body, particularly during its substantive session in July.

The current debate on the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/65/3) and on the integrated follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits in economic, social and related fields further underscores the importance of the Economic and Social Council as the mandated body within the United Nations structure for promoting coordination, coherence and cooperation in the United Nations system. Brazil believes that only a strengthened and revitalized Economic and Social Council can fully contribute to international policy discussions and deliberations on substantive issues of development.

During the current session of the General Assembly, Member States will have an important opportunity to review the progress to date and examine additional measures to further improve the workings of the Economic and Social Council. As an enthusiastic supporter of the Council, Brazil is certainly ready and willing to participate actively in this discussion.

Brazil recognizes that there have been important initiatives over the past few years to improve inter-institutional and intergovernmental coordination by the Economic and Social Council. The annual ministerial review has evolved and matured to become an increasingly important event on the international agenda, capable of mobilizing high-level officials from developing and developed countries alike. It offers a key opportunity for reviewing progress on specific policy questions relevant to the international community and for making concrete recommendations that can be acted upon by all Member States. It certainly can be improved upon, but its general design rests on solid foundations and important accomplishments.

The Development Cooperation Forum is also a significant innovation that merits our full support. It has contributed to promoting coordination and exchanging information on relevant development cooperation issues, such as official development assistance and South-South cooperation. It is one of the

rare bodies that brings together practitioners and policymakers to discuss issues related to the quality and quantity of cooperation for development.

Despite the progress achieved so far, Brazil believes that the Development Cooperation Forum should be further strengthened as the main forum for discussions in the United Nations system on development cooperation issues. In this regard, we should explore the possibility of increasing the frequency of the Development Cooperation Forum's meetings and of introducing a negotiated outcome to its deliberations.

The Chief Executives Board for Coordination is playing an increasing role in promoting coordination at the administrative level among the 28 agencies that form the United Nations system. Brazil notes with appreciation the progress achieved in various areas, including in relation to the integrated response of the United Nations system to the economic and financial crisis. However, we would also like to highlight the fact that some of the initiatives proposed by the Board to address the crisis seem to lack both a clear definition and a precise mandate from Member States. This is the case, for instance, of initiatives related to the concept of green economy, which has not yet been fully discussed by Member States.

It is encouraging to learn that the Chief Executives Board for Coordination has attempted to strengthen substantive dialogue with Member States on its ongoing work in opportunities such as the system-wide coherence consultations and on the global crisis. But Brazil would once again insist on the need to align the Secretariat's substantive action with existing intergovernmental mandates and priorities.

Brazil also believes that additional measures are warranted to improve coordination and oversight of actions and initiatives taken by the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions. In view of the responsibilities of the specialized agencies in the follow-up, implementation and monitoring of the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits, we would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the call for closer cooperation between their governing bodies and the United Nations, most notably the Economic and Social Council.

Brazil is generally pleased with the progress obtained in the first full year of operation of the strengthened intergovernmental follow-up mechanism to the financing for development process. We welcome in particular the participation by the President of the Economic and Social Council in the Bretton Woods institutions spring meetings, and hope this practice can be expanded in the future to include the World Trade Organization.

The multifaceted follow-up mechanism adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2009 is a step in the right direction, ensuring the continuous consideration of financing for development issues throughout the year. Nevertheless, we would like to recall that the Monterrey Conference is the only major United Nations summit in the field of development that did not result in the establishment of a permanent intergovernmental body to oversee and promote the implementation of its outcome. Brazil considers that this shortcoming needs to be redressed with the establishment of a functional commission on financing for development.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda items 9 and 13.

I join with colleagues who have commended Ambassador Ali of Malaysia for his sterling leadership of the Economic and Social Council.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 9 and 13.

Agenda item 15 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolution (A/65/L.5)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 32nd and 33rd plenary meetings, on 18 October 2010, the Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 14, "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations", and agenda item 15.

I now give the floor to His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad, Personal Envoy and Special Adviser to His Majesty the King of Jordan to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.5.

Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad (Jordan): I have the honour to introduce on behalf of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the 27 other sponsors — Albania, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Kuwait,

Liberia, Mauritius, Morocco, Oman, Paraguay, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Yemen — draft resolution A/65/L.5, entitled "World Interfaith Harmony Week".

Allow me to explain in brief the reasoning behind this draft resolution, which was launched by his Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein before the General Assembly on 23 September 2010 (see A/65/PV.12).

As this Assembly is well aware, our world is rife with religious tension and, sadly, mistrust, dislike and hatred. These religious tensions can easily erupt into communal violence. They also facilitate the demonizing of the other, which in turn predisposes public opinion to support war against peoples of other religions. Thus, for example, according to the results of a 2008 Gallup poll, one of the largest international surveys on religion in history, 53 per cent of Westerners have unfavourable or very unfavourable opinions of Muslims and 30 per cent of Muslims polled worldwide hold negative views of Christians.

The misuse or abuse of religions can thus be a cause of world strife, whereas religions should be a great foundation for facilitating world peace. The remedy for this problem can come only from the world's religions themselves. Religions must be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Much good work has already been done towards this, starting really with the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965, by hundreds of intra-faith and interfaith groups all over the world and of all religions.

Yet the forces inciting interreligious tensions, notable among them being religious fundamentalisms of various kinds, are better organized, more experienced, better coordinated, more motivated and more ruthless. They have more stratagems, more institutes, more money and more power and garner more publicity, such that they by far outweigh all the positive work done by the various interfaith initiatives. The sad proof of this is that religious tensions are on the rise, not on the decline.

The draft resolution before us seeks to turn the tide against this negative movement, first, by coordinating and uniting the efforts of all the interfaith groups doing positive work with one focused theme at one specific time annually, thereby increasing their collective momentum and eliminating redundancy.

Secondly, the draft resolution seeks to harness and utilize the collective might of the world's second-largest infrastructure, that of places of worship — the largest being that of education — specifically for peace and harmony in the world, inserting, as it were, the right "software" into the world's religious "hardware".

Thirdly, the draft resolution seeks to permanently and regularly encourage the silent majority of preachers to declare themselves for peace and harmony and to provide a ready-made vehicle for them to do so. Moreover, if preachers and teachers commit themselves on the record once a year to peace and harmony, this means that when the next interreligious crisis or provocation occurs, they cannot then relapse into parochial fear and mistrust, and will be more likely to resist the winds of popular demagoguery.

Turning to the text itself, allow me to explain some of its most essential terminology and concepts.

First, in the very title of the draft resolution and in the second operative paragraph and elsewhere, the word "harmony" is used in the Chinese sense of the term. We add it to the term "tolerance", which we have also used, because tolerance can suggest that the other is so negative that it has to be tolerated. We cannot use "acceptance" because it implies that religions accept each other's doctrines, rather than their right to those doctrines, and this is not the case. We cannot use the term "peace" alone because it suggests merely the absence of war and not necessarily the absence of hatred. Only the Confucian concept of harmony can rescue us here because it suggests not merely peace, but also beautiful and dynamic interaction between different elements within a whole.

Secondly, in paragraph 3 there is a mention of "love of God and love of one's neighbour or love of the good and love of one's neighbour". Why is this religious reference necessary in a United Nations resolution? In answer to this question, it will be noted first that the draft resolution is unique because it is specifically about peace among religions and not about anything else; therefore, some religious references in this particular case are only natural. To rigidly maintain the contrary would be to disregard the feelings of 85 per cent of the world's population that belongs to one or another faith.

Thirdly, and more importantly perhaps, we include these references because, while we all agree that it is clearly not the business of the United Nations to engage

in theology, it is nevertheless the primary goal of the United Nations to make and safeguard peace, and without the specific mention of God and of the two commandments of love, many — if not most — devout Muslims, Christians and Jews will consider a secular call for an interfaith harmony week to be a feckless platitude that they cannot fully or sincerely support. For in the Holy Bible, Jesus Christ said, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (*Matthew 4:4*) and "hallowed be thy name" (*Matthew 6:9*). Similar meanings are to be found in the Holy Koran, wherein it is stated that no act is rewarded save for seeking "the Countenance of the Lord, the Most High" (*XCII:20*) and that verily "the remembrance of God is of all things the greatest" (*XXIX:45*).

In other words, for many Muslims, Christians and Jews — who together make up perhaps 55 per cent of the world's population and, I regret to say, are involved in most of the world's conflicts — it is necessary to mention the substance of their faiths. Otherwise, hoping to foster peace between religions by foisting upon them an external and purely secular and bureaucratic language is simply a house divided against itself that shall not stand.

Fourthly, it will be noted that this language excludes no one of any religion or of no faith at all. Every person of goodwill, with or without faith, can and should commit to love of the neighbour and love of God or love of the neighbour and love of the good. Loving one's neighbour and the good is, after all, the essence of goodwill, and referring to the good obviously does not necessarily imply belief in God or in a particular religion, even though for many believers the good is God precisely. Jesus Christ said, "No one is good but God Alone" (*The Holy Bible, Mark 10:18*) and "the good" — "*Al-Barr*" — is one of God's names in the Holy Koran. Thus, speaking of the good is a theologically correct but inclusive formula — insofar as it goes — that unites all humankind and leaves out no one.

Fifthly, there is another reason why it is specifically necessary to mention love of the neighbour. It sets an invaluable, practical standard based upon which people can ask themselves and each other if their actions stem from *caritas* — love — towards their neighbour or not. Indeed, as the Prophet Muhammad said, "None of you has faith until you love for your neighbour what you love for yourself".

Also in paragraph 3, the phrase "on a voluntary basis" is used because the entire proposal must be purely voluntary. No place of worship should be forced to observe the World Interfaith Harmony Week for, while we hope to encourage interfaith harmony, the last thing we want is for anyone at all to feel that anything is being imposed on his or her faith, beliefs or convictions. Nevertheless, one can conceive of positive incentives to encourage and help support and monitor the implementation of the draft resolution.

Finally, and also in paragraph 3, the phrase "each according to their own religious traditions or convictions" is vital because the different religions do not necessarily interpret love of God and one's neighbour in exactly the same way and do not want it said that they do. This phrase thus avoids the dangers of syncretism or reductionism and allows for religious differences within the same goal of working towards interreligious peace and harmony.

In summary then, I very humbly ask the Member States of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.5 on the World Interfaith Harmony Week, noting that it excludes no individual, compromises no one, commits no one, forces no one, harms no one and costs nothing, and, on the contrary, includes everyone, celebrates everyone, benefits everyone, unites everyone and has the potential to bring much-needed peace and harmony to the entire world.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.5, entitled "World Interfaith Harmony Week."

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat to announce the additional co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

Mr. Zhang (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I wish to inform the General Assembly that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Suriname and Tunisia have asked to be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/65/L.5.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.5?

Draft resolution A/65/L.5 was adopted (resolution 65/5).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind

delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Burniat (Belgium): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on resolution 65/5, entitled "World Interfaith Harmony Week", which was just adopted.

The European Union would like to extend its thanks to the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the constructive spirit in which it led the consultation process on the resolution, as well as for its readiness to incorporate in the resolution a number of suggestions put forward by the European Union.

The European Union welcomes any call for dialogue, peace, tolerance and mutual understanding among peoples and nations. It is in this spirit that the European Union joined the consensus on the resolution based on the following understanding of some fundamental issues raised therein.

It is an established fact that religions, beliefs and faith cannot be considered actors under international law. Therefore, the European Union joined the consensus in the understanding that the reference to dialogue among religions, faiths and beliefs in the second preambular paragraph and paragraph 1 refers to dialogue among individuals with different religions, faiths and beliefs. As in other areas, any obligation of States with regard to religious affairs exists not vis-à-vis any religion, faith or belief as such, but solely towards individuals or groups of individuals and in full respect for both the individual's freedom of religion or belief and the independence of religious institutions in matters of belief.

The European Union is therefore of the view that the fourth preambular paragraph and paragraph 3 cannot be read as giving States a mandate to influence the manner in which individuals relate to their faith or beliefs or to impose their views on the substance or manner of any interreligious or intra-religious discourse.

Furthermore, some European Union member States have regulations and policies whereby the State is strictly separated from any religion. Therefore, we do not feel compelled to intervene in religious discourses in places of worship. However, the European Union fully subscribes to the wish expressed in the resolution for respect and understanding among follow rs of all religions, faiths and beliefs.

While acknowledging the importance of interreligious dialogue, the European Union wishes to state that both interreligious and intra religious dialogues are additional and complementary components of intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace. Religion or faith may constitute part of the multiple identities of individuals, but it is our understanding that by solely addressing one of the sources of identity, the resolution does not wish to imply the lesser importance of the others. In this respect, the European Union would like to highlight the roles of UNESCO in promoting all aspects of intercultural dialogue and of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in promoting understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions.

Finally, the European Union wishes to state its understanding that the call for interfaith harmony expressed in the resolution and for dialogue among religions, faiths and beliefs in the second preambular paragraph and in paragraph 1 is not limited to specific monotheistic religions or beliefs, for example, but is in fact meant to include all followers of any religion, faith or belief in a universal and inclusive manner.

Mr. Michelsen (Norway): Norway would like to thank Jordan for the manner in which it conducted the negotiations up to their successful conclusion today. Norway welcomes this important initiative, as we recognize the importance of peaceful coexistence among individuals of different religions and faiths and the importance of interreligious dialogue in promoting peace and understanding.

For the record, we would like to add that we fully subscribe to the understanding just provided by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union of some of the fundamental issues raised in the resolution.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammad (Jordan): Forgive me for taking the floor again, but I wish only to thank delegations, and in particular the now 31 sponsors, for the constructive spirit in which they engaged with us throughout the process of negotiations. In this context,

we would like to assure the members of the European Union that we agree with the fine distinctions they presented in their explanation after the vote, and we are grateful to them for their support and contribution.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): We welcome the adoption of resolution 65/5 on World Interfaith Harmony Week and the initiative undertaken by the delegation of Jordan. On this occasion, I would like to extend a warm welcome to His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammad and to thank Jordan for introducing this noble initiative. We are honoured to co-sponsor the resolution and pleased to see it embraced by the wider membership. This shows the commitment of the world community to making the world more peaceful and harmonious for future generations.

We believe that this call for peace, tolerance and mutual understanding will further contribute to the promotion of a global culture of peace around the world. For its part, Turkey will continue its efforts to promote our common values of peace, tolerance and respect for humanity.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): My delegation takes this opportunity to thank the delegation of Jordan for having brought forward resolution 65/5 on promoting goodwill among religions in order to advance a culture of peace. For several years now, the United Nations has taken up consideration of this agenda item. Over 10 years ago, Member States adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (resolution 53/243), and not long thereafter adopted the first resolution on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation.

The creation of a culture of peace among the peoples of the world is not a task to be taken lightly. All persons have a responsibility each and every day to promote peace, tolerance and mutual respect among all persons of the various religions traditions. Setting aside a week in the coming year for the purpose of raising consciousness regarding our common commitment in this regard certainly highlights the importance of this responsibility and can be instrumental in concretely translating love of God into love of neighbour, which means not only those of our own religious tradition, but each and every person, because everyone has dignity and value.

My delegation commends the manner in which the mission of Jordan carried out consultations regarding the present resolution. Some of my delegation's proposals were taken into consideration. At the same time, however, my delegation hoped that the resolution would have focused more on the importance of dialogue among religions at the institutional and authoritative levels.

In this regard, for example, one thinks of the various formal responses to A Common Word Between Us and You, including the Catholic-Muslim forum, which is an ongoing initiative in which many scholars of both religions have been meeting on a regular basis to advance interreligious dialogue. Moreover, the resolution does not clearly express the difference between faith at a personal level and religion at a more institutional level. In this sense, my delegation would have liked to have the title of the resolution changed from "World Interfaith Harmony Week' to "Worldwide Week of Interreligious Dialogue/Understanding" or "Worldwide Week of Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue". So too, my delegation would have preferred the word "interreligious" in the text, instead of "interfaith"; and the misleading word "harmony" replaced with "dialogue", "respect" or "tolerance".

Respect for religious and cultural diversity in an increasingly globalized world contributes to international cooperation and promotes enhanced dialogue among religions and persons. On the occasion of the adoption of the text before us, my delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm its ongoing commitment to promoting mutual understanding, respect, dialogue and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of all other religious traditions.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 15.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.